

REMARKS

Claims 1-27 are pending. Claims 1, 5, 10 and 12-14 are amended. Claims 15-27 have been added. No new matter has been introduced. Reexamination and reconsideration of the present application are respectfully requested.

In the July 26, 2005 Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-2, 4-7 and 9, 13 and 14 under 35 U.S.C. § 102 (b) as being anticipated by Guiton, U.S. Patent No. 5,069,737 (hereinafter Guiton). The Examiner rejected claims 1-3, 5 and 8 under 35 U.S.C. § 102 (b) as being anticipated by Benson et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,157,893 (hereinafter Benson). The Examiner rejected claims 10-12 under 35 U.S.C. § 102 (b) as being anticipated by Rainville, U.S. Patent No. 4,530,197 (hereinafter Rainville). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejections in view of the claims as amended.

Independent claim 1, as amended, now recites:

A hollow panel comprising:
first hollow portions arranged in a substantially same plane and having first sectional areas; and
second hollow portions arranged in the substantially same plane and having second sectional areas different from the first sectional areas, *wherein partition walls of the first hollow portions and the second hollow portions are made of like wood elements.*

The Guiton reference does not disclose, teach or suggest the hollow panel specified in independent claim 1, as amended. Unlike the hollow panel specified in independent claim 1, as amended, Guiton does not teach a hollow panel *“wherein partition walls of the first hollow portions and the second hollow portions are made of like wood elements.”* Instead, the Guiton reference is directed to a method of forming a stiffener for a panel. (*Guiton; Abstract*) Guiton discloses that the walls which form hollow spaces are constituted by layers of fiber and resin 86,

88, 92 and core formers 92 and 94 which are hollow glass reinforced plastic (GRP) and the like. (Guiton; Col. 4, lines 40-42) Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that independent claim 1, as amended distinguishes over the Guiton reference.

The Benson reference does not make up for the deficiencies of Guiton. The Benson reference is directed to a compact vacuum insulation panel. The compact vacuum insulation panel is comprised of two adjacent metal sheets spaced close together with a plurality of spherical, or other discretely shaped, glass or ceramic beads. (Benson; Abstract, Col. 7, lines 45-58, and Col. 8 lines 7 – 21) However, the combination of Benson and Guiton does not disclose, teach or suggest a hollow panel ***“wherein partition walls of the first hollow portions and the second hollow portions are made of like wood elements.”*** Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that independent claim 1, as amended distinguishes over the Benson reference, alone or in combination with Guiton.

Independent claim 5 recites limitations similar to those in independent claim 1, as amended. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 5 distinguishes over Benson, alone or in combination with Guiton for reasons similar to those set forth above with respect to independent claim 1, as amended.

Claims 2-4 and 6-9 depend from claims 1 and 5, as amended. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 2-4 and 6-9 distinguish over Benson, alone or in combination with Guiton for the same reasons set forth above with respect to independent claims 1 and 5, as amended, respectively.

Independent claim 10, as amended now recites:

A hollow panel comprising:

first and second partition walls defining a plurality of hollow portions arranged in a substantially same plane, *wherein a thickness of the first partition walls is different from that of the second partition walls and each hollow portion of the plurality of hollow portions has the same sectional area.*

The Rainville reference does not disclose, teach or suggest the hollow panel specified in independent claim 10, as amended. Unlike the hollow panel specified in independent claim 10, Guiton does not teach a hollow panel “wherein a thickness of the first partition walls is different from that of the second partition walls *and each hollow portion of the plurality of hollow portions has the same sectional area*” Instead, the Rainville discloses a thick metallic sandwich structure having layered core portions 16 and core portions 18, each of which is adjoined to face sheets 10 and 50 and have different thicknesses. (*Rainville; FIG. 1 and Col. 4, lines 35-57*) Nevertheless, Rainville fails to disclose, teach or suggest that the hollow portions formed by core portions 16 and 18 have the same sectional area. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that independent claim 13, as amended distinguishes over Rainville.

Claims 11 and 12 depends from independent claim 10, amended. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 11 and 12 distinguish over Rainville for the same reasons set forth above with respect to independent claim 10, as amended.

Independent claim 13, as amended now recites:

A hollow panel comprising:

first hollow portions arranged in a substantially same plane and having first sectional areas; and

second hollow portions arranged in the substantially same plane and having second sectional areas different from the first sectional areas, *wherein a solid portion forming member is inserted into some, but less than all of the first and second hollow portions*, the solid portion forming member having a section shape which substantially corresponds to a section shape of the part of the first and second hollow portions.

The Guiton reference does not disclose, teach or suggest the hollow panel specified in independent claim 13, as amended. Unlike the hollow panel specified in independent claim 13, as amended, Guiton does not teach a hollow panel “*wherein a solid portion forming member is inserted into some, but less than all of the first and second hollow portions*, the solid portion forming member having a section shape which substantially corresponds to a section shape of the part of the first and second hollow portions.” Specifically, Guiton suggests that solid forming member is inserted into all of the hollow portions. (*Guiton; FIG. 6 and Col. 4, lines 40-58*) Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that independent claim 13, as amended distinguishes over the Guiton reference.

Independent claim 14 recites limitations similar to those in independent claim 13, as amended. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 14 distinguishes Guiton for the same reasons set forth above with respect to claim 13, as amended.

Independent claim 27 recites:

A hollow panel comprising:
first hollow portions arranged in a substantially same plane and having first sectional areas;
second hollow portions arranged in substantially the same plane as the first hollow portions and having second sectional areas different from the first sectional areas of the first hollow portions; and
third hollow portions arranged in substantially the same plane as the first hollow portions and the second hollow portions and having third sectional areas different from the first sectional areas of the first hollow portions and the second sectional areas of the second hollow portions, wherein partition walls of the first hollow portions, the second hollow portions and the third hollow portions are made of the same material.

The Guiton, Benson, and Rainville references do not disclose, teach or suggest the hollow panel specified in independent claim 27. Unlike the hollow panel specified in independent claim 27, Guiton, Benson, and Rainville fail to disclose, teach, or suggest a hollow panel having ***“third hollow portions arranged in substantially the same plane as the first hollow portions and the second hollow portions and having third sectional areas different from the first sectional areas of the first hollow portions and the section sectional areas of the second hollow portions, wherein partition walls of the first hollow portions, the second hollow portions and the third hollow portions are made of the same material.”*** Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that independent claim 27 distinguishes over Guiton, Benson and Rainville, alone or in combination.

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Applicants believe that the claims are in condition for allowance. If for any reason the Examiner finds the application other than in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to call the undersigned attorney at the Los Angeles, California telephone number (213) 488-7100 to discuss the steps necessary for placing the application in condition for allowance should the Examiner believe that such a telephone conference call would advance prosecution of the application.

Respectfully submitted,

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